

**Meeting Notes
Tenant Work Group
November 30, 2009
6:30-8:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850**

Work Group Members in Attendance: Matt Losak (Chair), Felicia Eberling, Marc Elrich, Guy Johnson, Dale Tibbitts, Parag Khandhar, Rick Nelson, Chuck Short, and Alice Wilkerson

Via Conference Call: Leesa Hoover, Harrietta Kelley, Maureen Ross

Staff participant: Debbie Spielberg (Office of Councilmember Marc Elrich)

Notes:

Matt explained that this meeting was for reviewing the principles of the draft; the committee was not reviewing minor edits. He acknowledged that the draft had numerous grammatical errors, which would be corrected before the report was released.

Maureen discussed her concerns about the section of the draft regarding seniors. After some discussion, the following conditions and recommendation were discussed:

When there are rental increases:

- For seniors, 62 or older, dependent on social security;
- In a year with little or no cost of living adjustment (COLA) for social security recipients;
- From a landlord who receives subsidies from federal, state, local for affordable senior housing in their building, and
- That are greater than the COLA increase

Then, a mandatory review of the rent increase is required. An agency in the county would be designated to review the rent increase. The landlord would have to submit information explaining why the rent increase is necessary. The explanation could not simply be to make money.

The committee agreed to the principle of Maureen's revised proposal and agreed that the details and wording will be worked out.

Parag reviewed his edits to the draft regarding language access issues. His edits were as follows:

Issue III, Communication and Information, section a. Standard Leases, add a 9th recommendation:

"Translations of the model lease and other documents should be made available in the most commonly spoken languages in the County on the DHCA website and for distribution throughout the County."

Section c. County Outreach Efforts, insert as the second recommendation:

“The Landlord Tenant Handbook and other resource lists should be translated and made available in the most commonly spoken languages in the County.”

The committee agreed to both edits.

Guy presented his additions as follows:

Issue 1. Affordability and Security of Rental Housing, section g. Retaliatory Evictions, add an additional recommendation:

“A requirement that landlords specifically state why a tenancy is not being renewed when the non-renewal comes after a month-to-month tenant has engaged in a protected activity.”

Guy also provided an example to be used in a box to illustrate how retaliation can be hidden. NEED TO ATTACH or PASTE IN HERE

The committee agreed to both of Guy’s edits.

Matt explained that the chairman’s letter will be drafted at a later date. He explained what the letter’s contents will include: how and what created the work group, where the members come from, unresolved issues that the work group could not or did not address, an emphasis on the need to for similar work to continue into the future and thank you’s. Matt welcomes comments from all about the content of the letter.

Matt will also circulate the executive summary, which can’t be drafted until after the report is complete.

Matt will work with Chuck Short and Marc Elrich’s office to smooth out the writing.

It is envisioned that the report and the survey will be released in mid-January.

After holidays, the group will discuss via e-mail how the report and survey will be presented. Some of the activity will likely involve presenting around the county as well as specialized meetings with certain groups, and communication with the media.

The group agreed that the report and survey should be presented first to the County Executive before the publicly release.

Maureen called for one more meeting of the TWG to review the report before it’s given out. Matt agreed that after the writer(s) has smoothed out the report; it will be reviewed again, but the contents will not be changed.

Harrietta wants to be sure that her name is spelled correctly.

The group then voted on the draft as presented and edited. The draft was approved, and the vote was as follows:

Vote to approve:

Felicia Eberling
Guy Johnson
Harrietta Kelley
Parag Khandhar
Matt Losak
Maureen Ross
Alice Wilkerson

Leesa Hoover abstained.

Chuck Short and Rick Nelson abstained because they are representing the County Executive. Marc Elrich abstained because the proposal will be coming before the County Council.

Matt not sure how reporting voting results will be handled.

Marc thanked everyone for their participation and hard work and thinks there will be some good helpful ideas to improve housing in the County. He pointed out that these are not just tenant issues. Stable rental communities are very healthy for single family neighborhoods. Reducing mobility is important for schools too.

Rick thought it has been a useful process and a lot has come out of it already.

Chuck thanked everyone for their work; he thanked Matt for his civil and dedicated leadership. Matt also thanked everyone and spoke about his appreciation for AOBA's willingness to participate and their professional and helpful attitude.